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Intelligence Support to U.N. Peacekeeping Operations

By Charles Williams

I propose the United States can best help the United Nations in resolving conflicts by indirect efforts, specifically through intelligence support. Recommendations for United States' action include:

- Provide the U.N. with non-sensitive background information on a continuous basis.
- Organize and train U.S. tactical direct support teams with remote sensor and intelligence collection capabilities to augment U.N. forces.
- Withhold sensitive information from the U.N. until information and communications security systems are reliable.
- Use political pressure on the U.N. to make organizational reforms and get information handling capabilities.

My recommendations for United Nations actions include:

- Acquire the means to manage, sort and retrieve large quantities of sensitive and routine data.
- Create an effective intelligence base from its own and outside information sources.

The obstacles to effective U.S. intelligence support to U.N. operations are:

- Compromise of intelligence sources and methods.
- Integrity of communications and information security systems.
- Political concerns over U.N. loss of neutrality with dependence on U.S. information.
- Executive abuse of privileged information at the United Nations Secretariat and lack of discipline with sensitive information.

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Intelligence Support to U.N. Peacekeeping Operations

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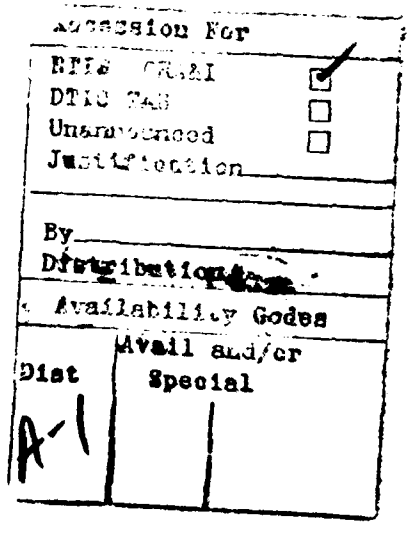

Intelligence Support To United Nations Peacekeeping Operations

The United Nations' ability to resolve conflict will determine, to a large extent, the stability of emerging world order. Effective intelligence support greatly enhances peacekeeping and peacemaking, the operational aspects of conflict resolution. Providing effective and timely intelligence support to the United Nations' conflict resolution mission is in the U.S. national interest.

The United States is dependent on international trade for both raw materials and markets for our products. Regional tension or conflict can disrupt world trade impacting our economy and potentially threatening our national security. The United States clearly benefits from the peaceful resolution of disputes: successful conflict resolution efforts serve our national interests.

The United States is the most powerful country, but it has neither the desire nor resources to impose and enforce a "Pax Americana." A less costly and risky alternative is supporting the United Nations which is assuming an increasing role in conflict resolution since the end of the cold war. With the best intelligence capability in the world it's logical for the U.S. to provide intelligence as our U.N. contribution; however, several issues require analysis and policy decisions:

What can intelligence support do for peacekeeping efforts?

Is intelligence support the most effective type?

How should we share our intelligence?

How do we protect intelligence sources?

Should the U.S. share sensitive intelligence?

These questions serve as the framework for this paper. I first will examine the U.N.'s new role in conflict resolution and why I believe it is in the United States' interest to participate in U.N. efforts. Next, I provide a discussion of potential contributions to U.N. efforts by effective intelligence support and the problems blocking it. Finally, I outline my recommendations on how the United States can provide direct or indirect intelligence support and my conclusions.

New U.N. Roles in Conflict Resolution

The new U.N. roles are **preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping** and **nation building.** Conflict resolution is evolving from the classical peacekeeping role to this evolving effort Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali described in **An Agenda for Peace.** (3) Each of these elements of conflict resolution can be directly enhanced by intelligence support.

Preventive diplomacy, a proactive effort, intends to prevent future problems before they erupt. Influencing peaceful change by political or economic means,

preventive diplomacy will attempt to cool political hot spots. Intelligence support will identify the areas at risk, key actors, their perceptions, and the effectiveness of ongoing efforts.

Peacemaking or peace enforcing are U.N. military operations to stop aggressive or repressive nations. Forcefully imposing settlement on the warring parties, the U.N. force will stop hostilities. Offensive military actions have always been authorized in Chapter Seven of the U.N. Charter, but weren't usable until the end of the cold war when a U.N. political consensus became feasible. Intelligence support to peacemaking would allow more effective use of force to get a cease fire and minimize the loss of life and property.

Peacekeeping is the classical U.N. role of monitoring a separately negotiated agreement after the fighting has stopped. Authorized in U.N. Charter Chapter Six, the U.N. forces enter only after all parties agree to a settlement. The peacekeepers' mission is to be an honest broker in monitoring the agreement terms. Intelligence support would permit a much more effective and efficient force in monitoring contested areas and verification of treaty terms.

Nation building is achieving a functioning government and economy where the people have hope and won't resort to violence out of desperation. Nation building is the bridge to a permanent peace where the population can govern and support themselves. When local government is gone, this process provides interim civil authority and civil services allowing the nurturing and development of

governmental and economic institutions. Intelligence efforts will monitor the nation's progress and provide warning of any threats similar to the peacekeeping intelligence mission.

U.S. Participation In Conflict Resolution

Why should the U.S. Participate?

What are the threats to the national security of the United States? What do we have at stake? If we are involved in the "New World Order" we have the chance to influence and shape a world friendly to us and non threatening to our interests. The cold war is over, the Soviet Union is gone and we currently have no significant adversaries. However, the "New World Order" is coming along with a host of unknowns and uncertainties holding numerous threats to our economic, if not military, well being. The "New World Order" will arrive regardless if we participate. If not engaged, we will still have to live with the results, no matter how good or bad they are. Participation in U.N. conflict resolution efforts is the most efficient way the U.S. can take leadership in shaping the new world order without forcing our will on the world.

The best place for our leadership and participation is in the supporting roles of providing intelligence, logistics and transportation. This point was made by President Bush, in his speech to the U.N. The New York Times reports he

"offered to buttress the U.N. peacekeepers with America's considerable logistical and intelligence capabilities." (A24)

The best place for U.S. leadership is not in the forefront of U.N. operations but is best done behind the scenes. Martha Bills et al, in **Options For U.S. Military Support to the United Nations,** explains with the political nature of the United Nations we must avoid the perception that we, or any one country, can manipulate the direction of events. With the United States as the only remaining superpower, our presence and interest in U.N. efforts can raise third world countries' suspicions. This may be the lingering result of cold war propaganda but, in any event, the third world may perceive manipulation of the U.N. to further the U.S. agenda at the expense of smaller nations. High profile U.S. forces as the symbolic picture of peacekeeping operations can stir fear of U.S. domination in those already suspicious of our motives. (18)

U.S. Sharing Intelligence

The U.S. intelligence system has the capability to help the U.N. resolve conflict. With extraordinary comparative advantages in intelligence and other capabilities, the U.S. will "be the linchpin of any major U.N. enforcement operation." (U.N. Association 31) Senator Boren, former chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, testifying before the Committee on Foreign Relations, offered that we could share intelligence, enabling United Nations anticipation of problems and provide the opportunity for preemptive action.

Previous security concerns prevented sharing of intelligence. We were concerned the Soviet Union would discover and counter our intelligence methods and sources. The Soviet Union and its various client states would have full access to any information provided to the United Nations; we would have the same access to any information they provided. Mutual distrust prevented any intelligence cooperation on joint efforts.

With fewer threats to our intelligence infrastructure, we can afford the compromise risk of selectively sharing our intelligence product. Since the fall of the Soviet Union we have no challengers to our world leadership, but we have numerous threats to world stability. After the cold war our intelligence community must justify its cost and existence: it is time to re-evaluate the threats to our national interests and the intelligence community's mission. Part of that mission can directly counter the threats to our interests by improving the effectiveness of U.N. conflict resolution efforts.

U.N. Intelligence Operations

What Can Intelligence Contribute To Conflict Resolution?

Intelligence support is valuable in both the grand strategic and the local tactical aspects of conflict resolution.

Strategic Effort. The overall effectiveness of U.N. decisions will depend on the quality of the information available. The Secretary-General recognizes the strategic importance of accurate information and is calling for establishment of an early warning system. Under the preventive diplomacy program, Boutros-Ghali wants warning of threats to peace and identification of economic and social situations that might pose a threat to international peace and security. Once identified, actions to ease tensions are possible before conflict erupts. (3) Senator Boren, in the New York Times, reflected this same thought, "by sharing intelligence the U.N. forces could anticipate regional crises, natural disasters or attempts at ethnic cleansing."

A well informed Secretariat and Security Council will be much more capable to overcome propaganda and half truths to build consensus in getting all nations to fully support or comply with security council decisions.

Tactical Operations. Intelligence support is vital for the U.N. mission's success. U.N. forces with reliable and fast intelligence sources can locate and stop trouble or verify compliance to facilitate the peacemaking process. If the U.N. force is very efficient and effective at stopping hostilities and monitoring settlements, it can only help in building a lasting peace. Charles Ayers describes in **Peacekeeping: Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures** the elements of the intelligence function as the peacekeepers' primary mission. Accurate observation, analysis and timely reporting of any suspicious situation are the tasks at hand.

Behind the task is the comprehension of the facts and the implication with respect to the opposing sides' intentions and capabilities. (31) Intelligence support sheds light in understanding events, enabling the observers to be much more effective and alert for problems. The use of intelligence assets can never replace the U.N. forces on the ground, but they are a force multiplier that allows fewer personnel to accomplish the same mission.

New Missions

Poor background or initial intelligence can doom a new mission's success. History shows the first six weeks will determine a mission's success or failure. Inaccurate initial information cannot only hinder but set back the planning, wasting critical time when the peacekeeping force must prove itself credible. (Durch 34,35) This initial information includes the combatants' order of battle, local facilities, transportation, roads, bridges etc. An example of how initial intelligence support can help comes from Somalia: satellite generated maps were helping U.S. forces navigate around the unknown countryside .(Space News 3) This shows how accurate, ground truth, information from national technical means can help overcome a lack of basic background information.

Early Warning For Force Protection

Intelligence support is vital to any force's self-protection! Every force commander needs information to ensure the safety of his personnel: especially if armed forces with unknown intentions surround him. If one of the belligerents is planning an assault, putting the U.N. forces in danger, early warning allows withdrawal of the U.N. force to safety. An example occurred in Lebanon when Israeli forces in a preemptive action overran U.N. forces.

In the situation of a raid or minor altercation, advance information would allow the commander to prepare before entering into the fray. An example is the situation in Bosnia where the U.N. force encounters warring factions while escorting food shipments. With effective intelligence support the convoys could avoid pockets of resistance or time the convoys when hostile forces are inactive.

If the international community knows the best support is in place for peacekeeping forces, they will have less hesitation to provide forces to participate in peacekeeping/peacemaking missions.

Mission Commander Support

What type of intelligence support should the U.N. force commander receive in the field? High level support could include the summaries from intelligence products that reflect the intent of the opposing parties and anything changing the situation or

impact on the force commander's ability to accomplish the mission. Examples of such things would be:

- ° Impending operations on either side
- ° Location of armed forces or arms caches
- ° Indications of political activity or civil unrest
- ° Outside factors influencing local situation

In addition the political advisors at the U.N. headquarters could add their analysis of the situation and provide recommendations for strategies to deal with expected events.

Local Intelligence Support

Locally generated and focused intelligence will probably prove more valuable than national sources to the mission commander. Expanding the intelligence collecting and processing role: already done by peacekeeping forces under "information collection": to include the use of modern technology will enable generation of much more information without increasing the peacekeepers profile. Several different proven and reliable intelligence disciplines are available: Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) and Electronic Warfare (EW).

Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) and Electronic Warfare (EW) groups could support the mission commander with real time indications and warning of hostile

operations. Both the U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps have elements capable of these functions. The U.S. Marine Corps' Direct Support Units (DSU), task organized detachments, intercept, process, analyze and report on hostile electromagnetic emissions. In addition to locating transmitters with radio direction finding equipment, they provide tailored support depending on the situation. These DSUs provide timely, direct support intelligence information to the tactical commander.

Drawing on the resources of their parent command, the DSUs bring a wide variety of capabilities to the supported commander. Included in each DSU is a communications function that can provide rapid and secure worldwide communications. This could provide primary or alternate secure communications paths to the force commander.

Another DSU feature is the "radio reconnaissance team" with the mission of SIGINT/EW support during advance force, pre assault or special operations. These teams provide less support but are very low profile, blending in with ground forces, yet they provide a unique element in mission effectiveness and own force protection. (Fleet Marine Force Reference Pub 3-28, chapter 4)

Remote Monitoring

Successfully used before, remote monitoring has great promise for peacekeeping forces. A wide variety of technical systems are available: satellites; aircraft, both manned and unmanned; ground detection systems; television, including low light and infrared; and ground surveillance radar all have direct application in peacekeeping operations. (Lewis 123)

Space. Satellite surveillance and other intelligence sources can efficiently monitor borders and rapidly provide knowledge of developing problems. With timely notice the U.N. force can go to the location and take action either to pre-empt or to minimize a situation. Additionally, satellite information can passively reveal holes in economic embargoes against countries, enabling action to make the embargoes tighter and more effective.

Aircraft. Manned aircraft are probably the most effective but require a large supporting infrastructure and are very expensive. They can provide unique capabilities such as synthetic aperture radar that can look through jungle canopies. (Durch 82)

Remote piloted aircraft are much cheaper, require less support and, in most circumstances, provide adequate information while placing no one at risk while flying around contested airspace. Low altitude drones used in the Gulf war

have the capability to carry television cameras, low light, infrared, or other sensors which can effectively monitor a large area. (Durch 82)

Ground Sensors. The Army REMBAS and the Marine Corps SCAMP systems are integrated multi-sensor systems including acoustic and seismic sensors to detect and classify personnel and vehicles passing by. Ground surveillance radars offer another option for monitoring buffer areas along with low light and infrared vision devices. (Lewis 124)

Coordinated Use

A network consisting of SIGINT/EW capabilities and remote sensors of video cameras, acoustic/seismic ground sensors, and motion detecting radar, would enable a small peacekeeping force to watch a large area. Ayers said "these sensors were of limited value in themselves but when properly integrated into an overall plan proved to be most effective." (124) When intrusion is detected, the first response can be a remotely piloted drone which can rapidly get to the scene and send back a television picture. Depending on results, either an alert force can be sent out or with a false alarm, reset the sensors and continue monitoring. Coordinated use of technology could enable a small force to monitor an area out to the radio horizon and have an armed patrol standing by only to investigate alarms.

U.N. Organization to Use and Generate Intelligence

The U.N. organization currently cannot collect or handle information efficiently or effectively. The Secretary-General must rely on informal, ad hoc, information sharing by member states along with the reports of U.N. survey teams. Disestablished in 1992, the Office of Research and Collecting Information (ORCI) was started, to meet this need, in 1988 but was never given sufficient resources for its mission. The responsibility shifted to the office of Political Affairs whose performance is unknown. (Durch 37, 39) It is my assumption: supported by experts' opinions: a very rigid, antiquated bureaucratic organization of firmly entrenched staff, who are either unable or unwilling to change, limit the U.N. With respect to intelligence support, no effective organization exists to handle outside information much less internal information.

U.N. Organization to Handle Information

The U.N. Association proposes a small group of senior political officers who would be responsible to receive and evaluate information for the Secretary-General and the Security Council. This group, from the various national intelligence services, would be appointed by the Secretary-General with approval of the Security Council. They would be on the U.N. Secretariat staff but would remain in close touch with their parent intelligence agencies. They could bring in

diversity in analyzing events and especially in evaluating the intentions of nations whose actions are questionable. The U. N. Association expects, at a minimum, participation of the Security Council permanent members since they have the most at stake. (22)

The French proposed the U.N. have an independent space satellite for gathering information and monitoring developments around the world. The U. N. Association comments if the major powers all contribute the results of their intelligence efforts, this project would be a wasteful expense. An argument can be made for an independent source to validate information and prevent any one nation from selectively filtering information for political purposes. (22)

U.N. Capabilities

Proposing a structural change to the U.N. organization is beyond the scope of my paper, but I will describe desirable functions and capabilities it needs. It must be able to:

- Receive and process all open source information such as news wires, newspapers and television (such as CNN)
- Get data from all U.N. associated organizations around the world. E.G. reports from World Health Organization, UNESCO, UNCIF, etc.
- Provide limited access and security for sensitive information provided by member states.
- Function as earth station to receive independent satellite data either purchased by or donated to the U.N.

° Provide 24 hour support to the Secretary-General, Security Council, Joint military planning group and all deployed U.N. forces.

° Provide for rapid secure communications with all intelligence contributing nations and mobile secure communications to deployed U.N. forces.

Problems Blocking Intelligence Support

Information Compromise

Can the U.N. protect and provide security for sensitive information? The U.N. Association states the integrity of the U.N. intelligence professionals would determine the success of their proposal: I think the real question is the discipline of the U.N. members with access to the information. If limited to the Security Council, the five permanent members might reach a consensus to keep the information private, but the ten rotating members may not feel restricted, especially if a close regional or political ally is the subject of derogatory information. One proposal for the U.N. would be to get a basic classification system where two levels exist—routine and sensitive. No special restrictions on routine information but sensitive information, only briefings would be provided. Documention of sensitive information would not be left with the Security Council members.

Can the U.N. securely communicate sensitive information? Member states won't

contribute sensitive information if they think it will be compromised in communications from inadequate encryption or poor procedures.

Intelligence Product Bias

If only one country provides information, they may slant it. The Secretary-General is in a position of not knowing if he has accurate information or not. By accepting information the U.N. could be overly aligning itself with one side in a controversy. The perception can quickly develop that information is selectively filtered to make the case for the originator's agenda.

Intelligence support from other countries would give an air of legitimacy and add expertise in regional, cultural and other perspectives not shared. The validation of assessments by additional sources would build confidence in the system and prevent perceptions of undue influence on the process.

Distrust of U.N. Forces Collection Intelligence

It is natural for nations in conflict to be suspicious of anyone who wishes to observe their military disposition and send out reports. Charles Ayers points out in **Peacekeeping Tactics, Techniques and Procedures** this problem will face the U.N. forces who don't have the trust of the host country. "Belligerent parties may perceive information gathering as a hostile act" and it may destroy trust in the peacekeeping force. Even though intelligence collection and processing is one of the primary tasks of a peacekeeping force, they call it "information gathering" in an attempt to cast it in the best possible light. (55)

Conflict resolution will be impossible if the hostile parties don't trust the peacekeeping force's discretion. This exact scenario happened in Iran during its war with Iraq. Iranian forces treated U.N. observers like Iraqi spies trying to inspect the defenses and disposition of forces. The Iranian army restricted their movements and took all of their communication equipment. (Durch 32,33) While the mullahs leading the Iranian army were overly suspicious, this event still shows the importance of perceptions and the need for handling situations delicately.

Intelligence collection must have limited scope to avoid breaking the local trust and support. (Durch 32) Low profile intelligence collection methods must be used where high profile efforts will create distrust or tensions.

Abuse of Executive Power

Information is power. With an intelligence base the Secretary-General may become more powerful and independent relative to the Security Council. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, already criticized for being far out in front of Security Council, is consolidating power in his office. Jeane Kirkpatrick, a former ambassador to the United Nations, wrote in the Washington Post that Boutros-Ghali has sought to assume unprecedented powers and functions and has repeatedly told the Security Council what it should and should not do. She raises the question who is in charge at the United Nations—the nation states or the Secretariat? (A19) If the Secretary-General had a strong intelligence base, it would make the potential for abuse even greater.

U.S. Intelligence Support

Past Support To Classical Peacekeeping

United States intelligence support during previous peacekeeping missions has been inconsistent depending on the situation and the U.S. interests at risk:

U.S. Involvement: Recently, when U.S. personnel participate, they have been under U.S. commanders, supported by the entire U.S. intelligence community. This was evident during the gulf war and is ongoing in Somalia.

U.S. Allies Involved: When close allies of the United States lead peacekeeping efforts, we may provide tailored intelligence support under bilateral agreements. The mission commander in the field gets the information from his home country. Informal bilateral support to peacekeeping mission commanders might embarrass or insult the Secretary-General where, in the U.N. chain of command, a subordinate is better informed than the Secretary General.

Direct Support to the U.N.: When the situation is a serious threat to U.S. interests, we may supply information directly to the United Nations. An example occurred after operation Desert Storm, where the U.N. inspection office supervising the disarmament of Iraq, received information to help in their search for weapons stockpiles. (U.N. Association 22)

How Should the U.S. Share Intelligence ?

The U.S. should establish U.N. oriented support groups within each of the intelligence agencies: CIA, NSA, and DIA to provide an infrastructure. DIA, as the executive agent, would coordinate all intelligence support to the United Nations. The individual agencies would use their own personnel, trained in U.N. organization, operations and requirements, to staff the U.N. support groups. (Bills et. al 25) Part of the staff would rotate to the U.N. headquarters to receive the intelligence product, brief the appropriate offices and relate new and changing requirements back to the various agencies.

What Should the U.S. Share?

Assessments and monitoring are ongoing strategic military efforts the United States can contribute in support of the United Nations. Bills et al define them as:

- Assessments include global, regional, and country appraisals and estimates concerning political, economic, social, meteorological, and military developments and conditions. Information incorporated into the assessments will result from multi-source and U.N. reporting and be releasable to selected U.N. principals, staffs and military forces.

- Monitoring is the use of national and theater-level reconnaissance means in support of the U.N. An array of airborne, space, and ground systems would be employed to collect information useful for monitoring and verifying treaties and agreements, as confidence-building measures, and for assessing natural or ecological disasters. (6)

These missions would directly support what Boutros-Ghali calls for in his agenda for peace and are currently being performed by U.S. intelligence agencies.

How Can We Protect Sensitive Methods and Sources?

Intelligence support to the United Nations should be contingent on the U.N. establishing a system of controls and security protocols. We routinely share intelligence with close allies but under separately negotiated bilateral agreements with built in security protections. The bilateral agreement security arrangements can be the model for protection of data given to the U.N.

The U.N. should not get all our intelligence. Depending on the situation and what U.S. interests are at stake, we will determine what sensitive information, if any, to share with the U.N. A final clearance desk at DIA would have the responsibility to consider all factors before deciding releaseability. Options available to the final clearance authority to enable release of sensitive information are:

- Sanitizing the information—pulling out sensitive parts while forwarding the conclusions.
- Combining information into summaries—blending it with other sources preventing back tracing.
- Alter the attribution of the source.
- Delay the release until the information is seen in other sources.

This process was successful during the Gulf war; Senator Boren testified it was shown that operational intelligence sharing can be done in ways that do not compromise American sources and methods.

Recommendations

U.S. Contributions

Using intelligence as the means, the United States has these options to support the United Nation's conflict resolution efforts.

- Provide the U.N. with non-sensitive background information on a continuous basis.
- Prepare but withhold sensitive information from the U.N. until information and communications security systems are reliable.
- Organize and train U.S. tactical direct support teams with remote sensor, intelligence collection, and communication capabilities to augment U.N. forces.

Two additional options are available to the U.S. government depending on current relationships, the state of world affairs and what U.S. interests are at risk.

- Provide support to the country that provides the U.N. mission's commander, provided a bilateral agreement exists.
- Provide sensitive information to the U.N. if the danger of not providing exceeds the risk of compromising the information.

U.N. Actions

The U.S. has a vested interest in U.N.'s success and should take necessary efforts in concert with the other Security Council permanent members to bring about the organizational changes to make the U.N. an effective and efficient organization.

To make the U.N. an intelligent user, and eventually a producer, of information these changes are needed.

- Get the means to manage, sort and retrieve large quantities of sensitive and routine data.
- Create an effective information base from its own and outside information sources.

Security concerns not withstanding, I propose that the United States should still create the capability to provide all the support options listed above. Even if not used, we should have the ability available in the event of crisis. Implementing any type of intelligence support without planning and forethought could create delays and unnecessary compromises while leaving our national security vulnerable. The nature of U.N. inhibits change so it is not reasonable to expect change in the near future, but we should be prepared to support it when in our interests.

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